

early May 1965

Operation Headstart

Although given very short notice about this vital project, the people formed a committee and proceeded with the gathering of applications. We have close to 250 youngsters who have applied for this project. The executive committee headed by the Rev. J.F. McRee consists of people who represent the entire spectrum of the Negro community. Plans have been made to obtain three buildings in Canton and the sisters at the parochial school have indicated a desire to work in the project. The application and all the details were complying to the Federal Government, through the National Council of Churches (Via Tougaloo College). This should be a very successful project.

Public Accommodations testing

Once again, Canton is testing public accommodations, with some success. On April third, a small group went to Wardell's Restaurant, Jones Drug Store (It has a lunch counter), the barber shop, the Mecca Cafe, Roscoe's Cafe, and the movies. They were admitted to the white movie theater, in the white section, but only after the manager had removed all the white patrons from the theater. Later that week, two white staffers tested Roscoe's and were served. The door was not locked and it was not a key club as we had been told on Saturday. They attempted to enter the Mecca Cafe, but found the door locked and a members only sign. Affidavits were sent to the legal office for action against Roscoe's. On April 17, we returned to the movie theater, this time with over forty youngsters and five white staff members. We had to wait for the manager to arrive, but when he did, we were admitted to the downstairs section, only after the white patrons had left. We stayed for the whole movie. Later that night, a young man, while walking down the street with his wife, was accosted by two white youths. There was a fight and he was arrested. A fine of \$50 was paid and he was released. On April 19, the legal office informed us that a suit had been filed (Title II) against Wardell's. We plan to return to the movie theater every week and begin testing other public facilities. This summer, the testing program will include the white park. The program is headed by a local Canton man, Mr. C.O. Chinn Jr.

Selective Buying Campaign

For the last two years an economic boycott of the Power Structure in Canton, Miss., has been going on in an attempt to force the white storekeepers into a negotiation to try and bring about total integration in employment in the downtown stores and the removal of all "Jim Crow" signs, the use of courteous titles by all merchant and undiscriminatory practice in voter registration. Since that time the 425 Negroes who have registered before Jan 1, 1954 were also to go and re-register. All negro teachers have been asked to go to the courthouse and register with out fear of their jobs. About five downtown stores have complied with the demand, and at least six others have gone out of business.

Sewing Corporation

15 women in Canton, tired of being domestics for women who were making seven and eight times as much as they were, because they were working in jobs unavailable to Negro women, have banded together to form a sewing corporation. They feel that if they can work with a large enough group, they will be able to make more by sewing than by their previous work.

Their rate of production is such: To begin with ten people working one hour can produce twenty shirts. And after they get into the swing of it ten working one hour can produce forty shirts. This means that in an eight-hour day, 10 people can make 160 shirts at first, and later 320 shirts. They plan to work without salary at first. When profits begin coming in they would work at a dollar an hour. They need nine machines, including a zig-zag machine and a union special. Also they need electric material cutters, 20 pair of scissors(at least), compasses, tape measures, patterns, knives straight pins, inner facing for the shirts.

The women have already begun drawing up their by-laws with a law clerk. They are also raising some money locally, through collections, record hops, card parties, etc.

Labor

A pproximately eighteen men have joined together to discuss the formation of a union at one of the plants in Madison County. There is majority of negro workers at the plant who are being discriminated against in comparison to the white men working there. The men feel that they should be able to have the negroes unite and form a union to enable them to work on an equal plane with the white people there. They have negotiated with a union representative and are weighing the benefits of joining that particular union at this time. It is impossible to use names or facts at this time as the Madison county movement is not in its peak yet.

Re-Registering

About 310 Negro citizens registered to vote prior to Jan.1, 1954, are being informed that they can re-register to vote by signing the Registration Book.

Community Organization

Two communities in the county have rallied rather impressively around local problems. Community B(Madison-Ridgeland) has decided to do something about the condition of their roads. Citizens of that community have submitted a petition with 25 signatures to the beat supervisor. In this same community two families have decided to add their names to the Madison County school desegregation suit. Such actions and decisions are a most impressive step forward in an area where terrorization has held on even after other areas of the state have begun to open up. Community G has also been the scene of nearly autonomous local activism. A school bus driver there was involved in an accident with a white man. The white man was at fault. But the bus driver was charged with reckless

(community organization cont.)

driving; and he was told by the superintendent of schools that he would lose his job. His fellow drivers decided that they would refuse to drive any of the busses if this decision stood. The logical extension of this was that there would be no children at school, and parents and students decided they might as well get the most out of a situation and declare a school boycott. Such a boycott will have the children attend a freedom school instead of the classes they would normally attend.

Madison County Farmers Leagues Co-op

Progress of Madison county coop in the past two months has been great. Election of new boardmembers, sale of stocks, and fertilizers exceeding one hundred tons have already been sold by this coop. These are the basic functions the coop has been performing, but there is always room for improvement. The place of location this coop resides in is one of its main problems. Many people feel that the coop should be located in a rural area and not in Canton. Many others feel that Valley View is just not the place for people from the Flora area and vice versa. Canton, which is located in the center of the county should be used for the coop. The following week, the board of directors will bring before the general body three locations in which they chose to buy land. The prices of these three places are the lowest that can be found.

ASC Elections in Madison County

The election held on December 3, 1964, in communities B (Madison-Ridgeland) and F (Farmhaven) have been declared null and void. A special election in these communities will be balloting by mail with ballots to be mailed on or before May 14, 1965. Ballots received in envelopes post marked by 12 midnight that date will be counted.

Nominating committees made up of incumbent communities committeemen will meet soon to prepare a slate of nominees of active farmers who are best qualified for the committee work and who represent the various sections and types of agriculture in the various communities. In community F, they plan to hold the ASC election in the over. They plan to get the petition in by the 24th of April to run for the community committee. There will be a meeting on Wednesday night to make further plans for the elections. The elections will be by mail ballots. We will have to do a late canvassing by May 14th when the election is held.